

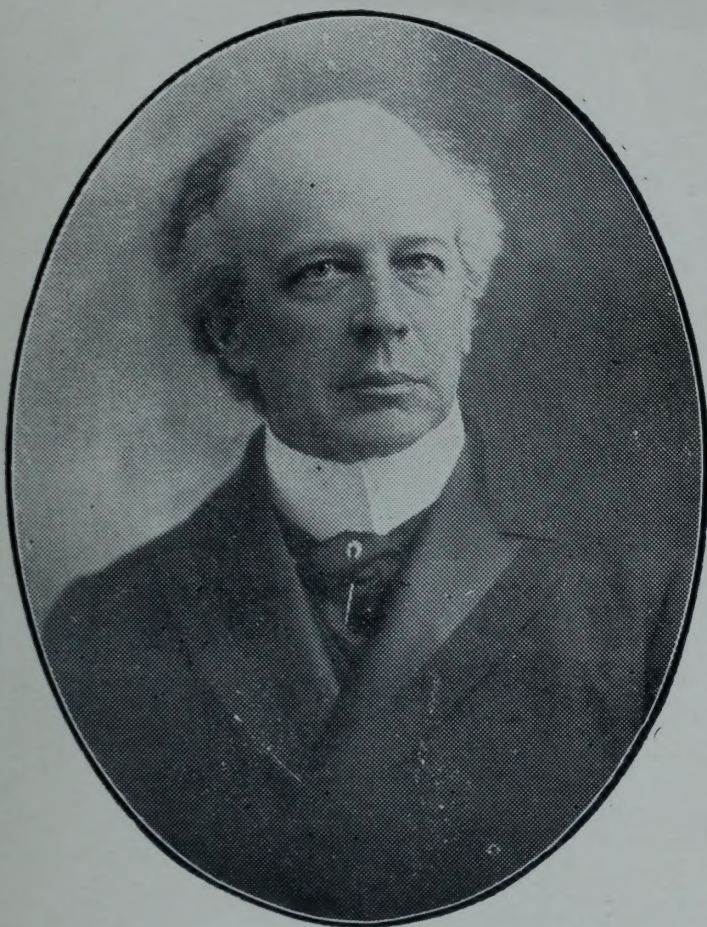


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The Naval Question



Speech by
SIR WILFRID LAURIER

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SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S

Speech on the Naval Question

NAVAL SERVICE OF CANADA.

SIR WILFRID LAURIER moved the second reading of Bill (No. 95) respecting the naval service of Canada. He said: When, three weeks ago, I had the honor of presenting this Bill to the House, I entertained the hope that by this time my hon. colleague, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Brodeur), would be sufficiently restored to health to permit him to undertake the duty which now devolves upon me. To my deep regret, this hope has not been fulfilled. It is the misfortune of the House that it has to be deprived of the wealth of information, attention and care which had been accumulated by my hon. colleague in the preparation of this measure and for the exposition of the policy of which it is the expression, from its basic principle to the minutest detail. Perhaps the House will agree with me at the outset that it would not be amiss to cast a retrospective glance upon the attitude which has been maintained up to the present by the two parties that now stand face to face on this question. In so far as the present government and the Liberal party are concerned, that question arose for the first time at the imperial conference in 1902. At the conference the subject of defence was very carefully discussed. The discussion revealed the fact—which indeed was not unnatural, which had often taken place before—that between the advisers of His Majesty the King in Great Britain and His Majesty the King in the dominions beyond the seas, there was a divergence of views. The Secretary of State for War requested—or I should say suggested—that the dominions beyond the seas should equip and maintain a body of troops for Imperial service, which, in case of war, would be turned over automatically to the war office. Some of the Dominions, through their representatives, to this agreed; others disagreed, among the latter being Australia and Canada. The Secretary for the Navy suggested—I don't say requested—that the

dominions beyond the seas should contribute yearly to the maintenance and equipment of an imperial navy. Most of the dominions there represented to this agreed, but the ministers who represented Canada could not give their assent to this proposition. They gave expression to their views respectively before the conference, and embodied them in a state paper with which the House and the country have long been familiar. They recognized at once the obligation of Canada to relieve to a large extent in so far at all events as the means of Canada would allow—the burden which has hitherto been on the shoulders of the British tax-payer alone. They declared that as Canada increased in wealth and population it would go further in the matter of defence, and that in everything that we would undertake in that direction, whatever might be done would be done in co-operation with the imperial authorities, but always and ever under the control and responsibility of the Canadian authorities, in accordance with our right to self-government in this as in all other matters.

This was in 1902, nearly eight years ago, and for eight years this policy of the present government has been before the country. From this policy the present government has never deviated. This policy we affirmed again at the imperial conference of 1907. We affirmed it again last year in this House when the question came up for concrete and immediate action. This policy is embodied in the Bill now before this House, and by this policy the present government stands or falls. But fall we shall not. This policy is in the best traditions of the Liberal party. This policy is the latest link in the long chain of events which following the principles laid down by the Reformers of the old times, Baldwin and Lafontaine, step by step, stage by stage, have brought Canada to the position it now occupies, that is to say, the rank, dignity and status of a nation within the British empire. This policy is the full maturity of the rights asserted, the obligations assumed, by Canada, which inspired the imperial poet whom,

after Canada had given a preference in her markets to the products of the mother country, he put in her mouth those proud words:

Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own;
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I set my house in order.

Sir, if we adopt to-day this policy, if we have put it in the form in which it is now before the country, it is because we lay it down that Canada is a nation, but a daughter nation of England. Such has been the strong and consistent course of the Liberal party from the time this policy was initiated.

And I may ask now, what has been the policy of the Conservative party? I think I am not offensive or unjust to the Conservative party when I say that upon this question their attitude has been what it is to-day—divided in counsel and divided in action. So far as this House is concerned, our policy more than once has received the assent, at least, the tacit assent, of the members of the Conservative party. It has been more than once reviewed or commented upon, but never challenged or dissented from. Outside of this House it has received the open commendation of the best and most experienced minds in the party. I am bound to say at the same time that it has been censured and criticised—severely censured and severely criticised—by those who within the party boast of their imperialism, who carry abroad upon their foreheads the imperial phylacteries, who boldly walk into the temple and there loudly thank the Lord that they are not like other British subjects, that they give tithes of everything they possess, and that in them alone is to be found the true incense of loyalty. Was it, Sir, because of the proddings of these very zealous and very efficient men that my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) brought up this question of imperial defence last year? I know not? But on the first day the House met my hon. friend gave notice of a motion designed to bring the matter in concrete form before parliament and the people. I understood the motion of my hon. friend to be an endorsement of the policy which we had always pursued, and in so understanding it I do not think I did him an injustice. I meant to pay him a compliment. At all events, this is the motion he offered:

"That in the opinion of this House, in view of her great and varied resources, of her geographical position and national environments, and of that spirit of self-help and self-respect which alone befits a strong and growing people, Canada should no longer delay in assuming her proper share of the responsibilities and financial burden inci-

dent to the suitable protection of her exposed coast line and great sea ports."

I repeat that as I construed the language of this motion—unless my hon. friend is a disciple of Tallyrand, who said that language had been given to man to disguise his thoughts—this meant nothing but an endorsement of our policy. It was so interpreted on the other side of the House. If we are to believe the tardy disclosure that we heard the other day from my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk), who told us that this motion created some stir in the ranks of the party, and that he at once had taken the position that he could not support it. Whether it was for this or some other reason, the fact is that my hon. friend from North Toronto, whilst he had been hasty in putting this motion on the notice paper, was very slow to move it.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend knows exactly the reason why. Will he state it?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not know; perhaps my hon. friend will tell me.

Mr. FOSTER. My right hon. friend knows quite well that the motion was postponed from time to time because of conference with my right hon. friend.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I am not aware that my hon. friend—

Mr. FOSTER. Then my right hon. friend had better refresh his memory before he makes the statement.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Pardon me—I have not finished my sentence. I am not sure that my hon. friend ever spoke to me about it, but if he did, it was simply to suit the convenience of the House, and not because there was on this side any opposition to his motion.

Mr. FOSTER. I did not say there was.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Neither did I imply anything derogatory to my hon. friend because he postponed moving it. But the fact is that he postponed it for two months; I do not know what the reason was. My hon. friend suggested to my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier that if they agreed the matter could be put over.

Mr. MONK. My right hon. friend's memory is evidently deceiving him in saying I opposed the motion. I stated the other day that I thought it was inopportune.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes, and my hon. friend is still of the same mind. My hon. friend from Jacques Cartier thought it inopportune, my hon. friend from North Toronto thought it opportune, many other

members on that side of the House thought it opportune, and we on this side of the House all thought it inopportune. Be this as it may, it is not worth having any discussion on this point, why the motion was not moved at the first opportunity. The fact is that it was not moved for two months until the 29th of March. At that time the atmosphere had become very much charged with electricity. A debate on the condition of the British navy had taken place in the Imperial House of Commons; attention had been directed to the armament going on in Germany, and the news had been flashed across the ocean that New Zealand had made an offer of a Dreadnought to the imperial government. Then it was that for the first time we heard in this House the suggestion of an offer of a contribution to the imperial navy. The suggestion came from my hon. friend from North Toronto, but it came in a very mild and tentative manner. I will give to the House the very language my hon. friend used on that occasion. This is how he spoke:

"To-day peril stands at the gateway. It is not for me to say how great it is, but I cannot brush it aside. To-day it impresses itself upon the greatest statesmen of the old country; to-day it appeals to Australia until public subscriptions are taken, and the government is being importuned to do even more than its settled policy to meet the emergency; to-day little New Zealand gives one Dreadnought and offers a second, and to-day Canada faces that position of peril and emergency. Let me say to my right hon. friend, that if after careful consideration he proposes to this parliament a means for meeting that emergency adequately, now and as it should be, whether it be by the gift of Dreadnoughts or the gift of money of this country, this side of the House will stand beside him, and stand for Canada in supporting that measure.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIED. This was not very effective language coming from my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster), it was not as incisive as his sentences generally are. I do not think he had yet found his sea legs. My hon. friend spoke rather tentatively, simply suggesting a contribution, and adding that if we proposed it he would agree. We did not think it was advisable to depart from the policy we had laid down. We said that we would maintain the position we had taken, and after some consideration the House agreed by a unanimous resolution upon the line of our policy of 1902, and in order that there may be no misgivings or misunderstandings upon that, in view of the cheers from the other side a moment ago, I shall once again read this motion:

"This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence.

The House is of opinion that under the present constitutional relations between the mother country and the self-governing dominions, the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the imperial treasury for naval and military purposes would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence.

The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the imperial navy, along the lines suggested by the admiralty at the last imperial conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the empire, and the peace of the world.

The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the empire."

When this resolution was moved, and accepted by a unanimous vote, we believed that it would be binding upon the other side of the House as it is binding upon this side, but in this we made a mistake. We supposed when this resolution had been solemnly adopted, gentlemen on the other side of the House who had given their assent would at least have the small merit of consistency, but in this we were deceived. It never entered our minds that men on the other side of the House would go back on the opinion they had solemnly recorded. In this again we made a mistake. We paid them too great a compliment. The session had hardly closed when the terms of this resolution were attacked and challenged by gentlemen who had voted for it, attacked in the press, attacked in conversation with reporters, attacked on the public platform. Thus the summer went on, everybody, almost, on the other side spoke upon this resolution, discussed it and controverted it. The leader spoke, his first lieutenant spoke, the rank and file spoke, and they all spoke together and all spoke differently, their fiddles were singularly out of tune.

This was the condition of things when this House met on the eleventh of November and we were the witnesses of a curious spectacle. The men who had been so loquacious during the recess suddenly became dumb, the men who had discussed and de-

bated this resolution, the moment they passed that bar yonder, the moment they came into this House at the time and place appointed for debate, became as mute as oysters. With a demure face and without a smile they told us they could not debate or discuss this question until they knew what had taken place at the conference at London, until they had all the papers, although during the recess, without knowing what had taken place at the conference, without having the papers, their nimble tongues had been wagging, wagging, wagging, in all the tones of the gamut, and in resonant cacophony. This sudden prudence and caution after so much extravagance of language did not deceive anybody; it was very transparent, although a somewhat clumsy attempt to hide the difficulty which it had been apparent to all observers, would meet them as soon as they came together. When they were talking among themselves, one here and one there, one in Alberta, the other in Winnipeg, one in Toronto and one in Quebec, they could all speak differently, each one trying to appeal to the passions and feelings of his immediate audience but when they came here they had to try to speak to the country, and speaking to the country, they had to speak something at all events like unanimous language. There was the difficulty. Hence the silence, hence the demand for papers, and in the meantime they met and deliberated. They deliberated in the morning, they met in the evening and again deliberated and the result of their meetings and their deliberations, if we are to credit the reports in opposition newspapers, although they are not always the most reliable, was the appointment of a committee with the object of trying to frame a policy, trying to reconcile the irreconcilable, trying to find a platform or something on which the bold lion from East Grey and the gentle lamb from Jacques Cartier could roar and bleat in unison. The task was rather a difficult one and how far the committee succeeded we know by what took place within three weeks, when this Bill was introduced for the first time. Three members of the opposition then spoke and all three spoke differently. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), if I understood his speech aright and I think I did, agreed to the principle of this Bill, but thought it did not go far enough. My hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk)—there was no hesitation as to what he meant—he is opposed to this Bill and to everything of that kind. My hon. friend from Digby (Mr. Jameson) also spoke: I do not know that I exactly apprehend his meaning, but I think he was not so very sure of his ground and he wanted to have a referendum.

Sir, the result of all this is plain, on the other side we have a House divided against

itself. At one end we have the negative extremists represented by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier. On the other end we have affirmative extremists, those who desire a navy, but an imperial navy to be maintained by contributions from the self-governing dominions, those who believe that if we have a navy it should pass automatically, in time of war, under the jurisdiction of the admiralty; those who believe one project of a navy is not sufficient, that we should also vote an emergency contribution.

Sir, all these forms of opinion are simply different forms of a respectable, though misguided, imperialism. And it is to that view I wish to address myself at first. If I may say so,—if I may be permitted to speak of myself personally—I do not pretend to be an imperialist. Neither do I pretend to be an anti-imperialist. I am a Canadian, first, last and all the time. I am a British subject, by birth, by tradition, by conviction—by the conviction that under British institutions my native land has found a measure of security and freedom which it could not have found under any other regime. I want to speak from that double standpoint, for our policy is an expression of that double opinion. Let me say at once to gentlemen who differ from me, to those who pretend that the British Empire must be the first consideration that, in my judgment, the policy which we advocate, the policy which I have the honour to place before the House at this moment, is in better keeping with the true spirit upon which the British empire was founded, upon which it exists, and upon only which it can continue to exist. There is a difference of opinion upon this, and it is to this difference of opinion that I desire to address myself at this moment. This is not the first time in history that men who have conceived a new idea and have made a sad failure when they have attempted to carry it into effect. Peter the Hermit preached the first crusade, and his voice aroused Europe. Under the influence of his impassioned words, man abandoned their avocations and took up arms for the deliverance of the tomb of the Saviour from Mohammedan desecration. But Peter the Hermit proved to be a most unfortunate leader. Thousands of men flocked to his banner, but the eloquent preacher was unable to direct their movements. Under his direction, the expedition of which he was in command moved on from disaster to disaster. And so it is with the shortsighted men who believe that their policy of centralization would unite the British empire. Mark the difference. Their policy is centralization; our policy is autonomy. And let the tale of the past tell the tale of the future. Sir, of all the phenomena of history, I do not know any that carries with it a greater lesson than the existence of the British empire, composed of young nations

scattered all over the earth, with no force binding them, but attached to the motherland simply by their own devotion. If, in the days of the Emperor Augustus, when Rome had reached the summit of her power, when after generations of conflict that empire had at last reached a condition of peace, when her dominions extended all over the basin of the Mediterranean, but when thirty legions were necessary and were kept moving all the time from one end of the empire to another to keep in subjection rebellious races—if then some one had said to the strong Roman statesman of that day: The time will come when the small island of Britain, now the most distant of Rome's possessions, will itself establish an empire which will extend to the confines of the earth and will be maintained, not by force but by a new principle discovered by her people, the principle that government must rest on the consent of the governed, these great Roman statesmen would have laughed at the idea; they would have said: That is Utopia; force and force alone, can build and maintain an empire. If, without going so far back, we go no further back in history than the first year of the reign of the late Queen when Upper Canada and Lower Canada were in the throes of rebellion, if someone had then said the day will come when these two provinces, now kept in subjection and obedience by force of arms, will reject force, will become obedient and devoted subjects, and will extend the Dominion of the Queen from ocean to ocean—the answer would have been that it was the maddest of all conceptions. Well, Sir, this maddest of all conceptions has become the reality of the present day. And now, Sir, I pause to ask: What is the principle, what is the inspiration, what is the one thing that quelled rebellion in Canada, that brought Canada to the position that she occupies to-day?—what is the principle, the inspiration which has made Australia what it is, which has made New Zealand what it is, and which to-day, in South Africa, torn by war only ten years ago, is building up a nation under the British flag? What is it, but the principle of autonomy, the principle of self-government? Yes, it was when Lord Durham, speaking from Canada, then still in the throes of civil war, said that the only manner in which the colonies could be kept loyal and devoted was to give them self-government—it was then that the principle was announced upon which the British Empire is founded. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), the other day, in his speech on the first reading of this Bill, said that the British Empire is of recent date. He is right, it is of recent date; the date was the day when the principle was adopted of self-government for the colonies. Consider, for a moment, what would be the position of Canada if we had continued to be governed, as we were in

1837, simply by irresponsible ministers in Downing street—irresponsible. I mean, to the people of this country? Should we have content, devotion, loyalty? No, we should have to-day what we had then—discontent, and dangerous dissatisfaction. Sir, the history of all countries which have had colonies is the same, with the exception of Britain in the nineteenth century. In every case there arose in the colonies a class of different interests from that of the mother country; the mother country would not yield; discontent crept in and led at last to estrangement. Lord Durham was the first statesman of all the ages to recognize this truth. And he proclaimed it boldly. And bolder yet was the remedy he suggested—give the colonies the same rights and privileges and powers as are exercised by British men in their own islands, the power to govern themselves according to their own rules and notions. The conclusion of Lord Durham was so strong that there was nobody to combat it. But it was so much at variance with the practice of all the ages that there was no one to apply it. When the constitution of 1841 was ostensibly established upon the report of Lord Durham, there was no acknowledgment of the principle of self-government, and the instructions given by Lord John Ressel to Mr. Poulett Thomson, the first governor under the new system, was to govern, not according to the views of ministers responsible to the people but in the manner directed by himself alone. And this is the manner in which Poulett Thomson carried out his instructions. In a letter to a friend he said:

"I am not a bit afraid of the responsible government cry. I have already done much to put it down in its inadmissible sense; namely, the demand that the council shall be responsible to the assembly and that the governor shall take their advice, and be bound by it. In fact, this demand has been made much more for the people than by them."

It was not until there was sent from England a man as broad in genius as Lord Durham himself—Lord Elgin—that, with the assistance of Baldwin and Lafontaine, we had responsible government in this country. And it was from that date that the British empire started upon its triumphant march across the ages. I again pause to ask: When these great men, Durham, Elgin, Lafontaine and Baldwin, laid down the principle of responsible government in this country, did they set a limit upon its potentiality? No, they launched it out, untrammelled and unfettered, to inclose the earth in a bond of union and liberty. They did not tell the people that the principle could be trusted for a certain distance, but that it would have to be abandoned the moment they came to the ultimate result of its operation.

But now we are told that in matters of naval defence we are to abdicate the principle of responsible government; we are told that we can have responsible government in everything else, we can make our own laws, we can administer our own affairs, and even have control of our land forces, but that in matters of naval defence we should have no powers of our own. I need not say that this principle is one to which we on this side of the House cannot agree. We are told that the only way in which naval defence can be carried on is by contributions to the imperial navy. I have to submit that this idea of contribution seems to me repugnant to the genius of our British institutions; it smacks too much of tribute to be acceptable by British communities. The true conception of the British empire is the conception of new, growing, strong and wealthy nations, each one developing itself on the line of its own needs and conditions, but all joining in the case of common danger, and from all points of the earth, rushing upon the common enemy. But, Sir, the point is no longer arguable. The point has been settled at the last conference.

Many and many a time upon the floor of the House, in the press of this country, we have been assailed, and our action has been compared with the action of Australia, who, in 1902, agreed to give a contribution for the maintenance of the imperial navy. But, Sir, let us look and see what has recently taken place in Australia. Australia has abandoned the position it took in 1902 and it has come to the position taken by Canada. Australia to-day, like Canada, is building a fleet of their own. And, Sir, there is something still more significant; it is not Australia which is paying a contribution to Great Britain for the purposes of the Australian navy, it is Great Britain which is paying a contribution to Australia for that purpose. Need I say more? All the best men, even in the ranks of the Conservative party, who have given any attention to this question have come to the way of thinking of the present government. That veteran statesman, Sir Charles Tupper, once the pride and strength of the Conservative party, has given unqualified adhesion to our policy. Need I say more? If there is an imperialist of the imperialists now living, it is Lord Milner. Lord Milner was here last fall, and you will pardon me, Sir, if I recall to the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite what were the opinions of Lord Milner upon this question. In Vancouver he spoke as follows:

"I have said that Canada is not unique in being a great country. But she is unique in being one of a group of countries which has a strong foothold in every corner of the world. That group only needs to hold together and to be properly organized in order to command, with a comparatively small

cost to its individual members, all the credit and all the respect, and, therefore, all the power and all the security which credit and respect alone can give a nation among the nations of the world. No doubt Canada if she is to take her place in such a union, will have to develop, as I believe she will desire to develop, her own fighting strength. But not to a greater extent than would be necessary in any case for the adequate development of Canadian self-respect or beneficial to the manhood of her people and certainly nothing like to the same extent as would be absolutely inevitable if she desired to stand alone."

Again at Toronto he made use of language even more significant:

"But no doubt the general position would be much stronger if all the self-governing states were to adopt the course which Australia seems disposed to adopt of creating a national militia and laying the foundations of a fleet. And I for one would welcome such a policy, wherever adopted, not as adding to the strength and dignity of the empire as a whole, its influence in peace as well as to its security in case of war.

It is not a question of shifting burdens, but of developing fresh centres of strength. For this reason I have never been a great advocate of contributions from self-governing states to the army and navy of the United Kingdom, though as evidences of a sense of the solidarity of the empire such contributions are welcome, and valuable, pending the substitution of something better. But I am sure that the form which imperial co-operation in this field will ultimately take, and ought to take, the form at once most consistent with the dignity of the individual states and most conducive to their collective strength and organic union, is the development of their several defensive resources, in material and in manhood. I know that it may be argued—it has been argued that individual strength would make for separation. But I have no sympathy whatever with that point of view."

Later he goes on:

"The profession and technical, not to say the strategic, arguments for a single big navy of the empire is enormously strong, so strong that they might conceivably overcome, as they have to some extent, overcome in the past, the political objection. But without wishing to be dogmatic on a subject which requires a great deal more careful study on all hands than it has yet received, I must say that, speaking as an imperialist, I feel the political objection very strongly.

If the self-governing states were going, under our present constitutional arrangements, merely to contribute to a central navy, whether in money or better still, in

men and ships, I do not think they would take that interest and pride in the matter which it is essential they should take. They would continue, as now, absorbed in their local affairs, and, even if they felt their obligation to the empire as a whole, they would rest content to have discharged it by such a contribution. The contribution, under these circumstances, would probably not be large, but this is not really the weakest point in such a system. Its fatal weakness is that the participation of the self-governing states in imperial affairs would begin and end with the contribution."

Now, Sir, from all this I think I can safely conclude that the true policy which should be followed, even from the primary point of view of the British empire, is not a contribution, but the development of our naval strength, as we contemplate to do under this Bill.

This point being settled, I now come to another which has been a source of strong objection made against us, that is to say, who should have control of our navy. Upon this point I stated the other day that the parliament of Canada would have control of the navy, and would declare when it should or should not go into war. Upon this point we have been assailed right and left, assailed in Quebec and assailed in Ontario. We have been assailed in Quebec because there it is said that under no circumstances should Canada ever take part in any war of England, assailed in Ontario, because there it is said that under all circumstances Canada should take part in all the wars of England. The position which we take is that it is for the parliament of Canada, which created this navy, to say when and where it shall go to war. The other day when introducing this measure, I stated that when England is at war we are at war. In saying this I have shocked the minds and the souls of many of our friends in Quebec.

Some men tore their hair and their garments as if I had uttered blasphemy, as if I had uttered some new and fatal proposition which never had been heard before. The truth is that in making the statement that when England is at war we are at war, I was simply stating a principle of international law. It is a principle of international law that when a nation is at war all her possessions are liable to attack. If England is at war she can be attacked in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, in Africa, in the West Indies, in India, and, in short, anywhere that the British flag floats. If France is at war she can be attacked not only in France but in her possessions in Cochinchina. If Germany is at war she can be attacked not only in Germany, but also wherever

the German flag floats. It does not follow, however, that because England is at war we should necessarily take part in the war; I will come to that presently. But, as that proposition which I laid down has been challenged in some parts of my native province, may I be permitted to recall to the memory of the members of this House an incident which is hardly ten years old? In 1898 the United States declared war upon Spain. The object of the war was to free Cuba from Spanish domination. The Cubans had been insurgent for many years. The congress of the United States decided to come to their assistance and they sent an army to Cuba in order to help the Cuban insurgents to free Cuba from Spanish domination and they did free Cuba from Spanish domination. But, at the same time, they sent a squadron to the Philippine Islands in the Pacific, a Spanish possession, and took possession of those islands. The same thing can be done again. If England is at war we are at war and liable to attack. I do not say that we shall always be attacked, neither do I say that we would take part in all the wars of England. That is a matter that must be determined by circumstances, upon which the Canadian parliament will have to pronounce and will have to decide in its own best judgment.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Can it be that there are men in this House so lost to the sense of responsible government that they will deny such a proposition? Let me illustrate my point by history. I appeal to history and I trust that I will be able to satisfy every hon. gentleman in this House. During the nineteenth century England had been more than once threatened with war. In 1861 she was nearly at war with the United States—luckily Providence averted it—when the United States ship 'San Jacinto' took from a British mail steamer the two delegates, Slidell and Mason, who had been sent to Europe as the agents of the southern confederacy. It was an act of war on the part of the United States so interpreted and rightly interpreted, but luckily the United States gave way and war was averted. If war had been declared immediately we would have been drawn into it and it would have been our duty at once not only to defend our territory but to help England in that struggle. There was another instance. England was at war in the Crimea with Russia. For myself I do not hesitate to say that if that war were to be undertaken by England under similar circumstances, I would hesitate very much before I would give my consent that we should take part in any such war if conditions were the same as they were then. But, they are

not the same now as they were then because at the present time we have British Columbia to look after and if war were declared between Great Britain and Russia our first duty would be to look after British Columbia which might be attacked by Russia from the Pacific ocean.

I am well aware that for expressing the opinion that I did express the other day and which I repeat on the floor of this House, I have shocked many and many a good Conservative mind. I was accused of treason. Charges of treason are familiar to me. I have heard them in my own province time and again, and I have heard them in the province of Ontario. Charges of treason are very easily manufactured. The other day I was speaking in Toronto. I was saying that we were British subjects, subjects of His Majesty the King, and in speaking of the sovereignty of the King I called in the use of the word suzerain, and in doing this I find that I shocked many a tender soul. I shocked the tender soul of the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) for one. When reviewing my speech a few days afterwards, he spoke as follows:

"Some rather foolish, even mischievous talk, has been indulged along these lines. It has been asserted that we have wrested our fiscal autonomy, our political autonomy, even our naval autonomy, from Britain, and the latest addition is practically our autonomy in our international relations. After this, all we have to do in bowing our knee and saluting King Edward is to call him not sovereign, but suzerain. It is a mistake which creates false impressions.

"If these utterances are merely for the sake of rhetorical adornment they are but foolish. If, however, they are studied and serious, they are revolutionary. We cannot have absolute autonomy in any of these and remain in the empire."

Well, is my hon. friend in this merely playing on syllables? If I had said "sovereign that was all perfectly loyal, but I said 'suzerain' and that smacks of disloyalty! Sir, I am sorry to say to my hon. friend that I rather rubbed my eyes when I saw his criticism. I do not pretend to be a master of the English language, but I think I know something of it, and I have always understood that if there is any difference between 'sovereignty' and 'suzerainty' it is merely a shadow and that it is used by men of greatest eminence indifferently as applying to the same condition of things. I am sorry that I have to ask my hon. friend to brush up his classics. Would he be satisfied with the authority of Sir Walter Scott? Would Sir Walter Scott satisfy his literary aestheticism, or

would he be satisfied that Sir Walter was sufficient of a Tory not to harrow his imperial soul? Let me ask my hon. friend, as I said a moment ago, to brush up his classics. Let me ask him to read again 'Quentin Durward' and he will find on the same page Sir Walter Scott using the expression 'sovereign' and 'suzerain' as applying to the same condition of things and to the same man. In the thirty-fifth chapter of 'Quentin Durward' my hon. friend will find that Lady Isabelle addressing the Duke of Burgundy, uses this language:

'My lord, duke and sovereign', said Lady Isabelle, summoning up all her courage, 'I observe your Grace's commands, and submit to them.' . . . 'My submission', she said, 'only respected those lands and estates which your Grace's ancestors gave to mine, and which I resign to the house of Burgundy, if my sovereign thinks my disobedience in this matter renders me unworthy to hold them.'

Again:

'My lord,' she replied, still undismayed, 'I am before my Suzerain, and, I trust, a just one.'

I think that after this I can be freed from the hypercritical fastidiousness of my hon. friend both in point of philology and imperialism.

Mr. FOSTER. Will you let me see the 'Durward' extract?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes. The great mistake which is made by those imperialists of the school of my hon. friend is to confound the condition which exists in Great Britain with that which prevails in the colonies. England belongs to the circle of nations which is known as the European concert, it is one of the four or five nations of Europe that are always watching one another. There are no public works to carry on there, and she can devote herself and her resources to armaments. But the colonies are not in that condition. Our chief consideration is public works, to develop the resources of our country, and therefore I say that this is a mistake which should not be made by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. They are not the first ones to make that mistake. England made the same mistake in the eighteenth century when she tried to force the American colonies to contribute to her armament by taxation. They protested, but their protests were not heeded. They protested again and at last, though they were a loyal population, they were driven to distraction and they severed the tie that connected them with

the mother country. Benjamin Franklin was one of the leaders of the movement in the colonies at that day, yet it is on record that he was a most devoted loyalist. He went to England to try and prevent the mischievous course which was being followed by the British government, but his visit was to no purpose. He was heard before the bar of the House of Commons. There the question was put to him whether or not, in case of war the colonies would contribute to assisting England and this is what he answered:

"I do think they would so far as their circumstances would permit. They consider themselves as part of the British empire, and as having one common interest with it. They may be looked on in here (in London) as foreigners, but they do not consider themselves as such. They are zealous for the honour and prosperity of this nation; and while they are well used, will always be ready to support it, as far as their little power goes."

If I quote this language, it is not because there is complete analogy between the conditions which exist to-day in the self-governing colonies of Great Britain and that which existed in her American colonies of that day. There is no danger to-day that England would impose taxation on her colonies without representation, or that her colonies would go into rebellion, but I read this because there are men here, who, like the Bourbons, have forgotten nothing and learned nothing, and who do not appreciate the present conditions existing between England and her colonies.

There is another point which I should give some attention. Great objection has been taken in the Province of Quebec because there is in this Bill a provision that, in an emergency the Governor in Council may call out the fleet and put it at the disposal of the War Office. Section 18 is in these words:

In case of an emergency the Governor General in Council may place at the disposal of His Majesty, for general service in the Royal navy, the naval service or any part thereof, any ships or vessels of the naval service, and the officers and seamen serving in such ships or vessels, or any officers or seamen belonging to the naval service.

Section 19 is in these words:

Whenever the Governor in Council places the naval service or any part thereof on active service, as provided in the preceding section, if parliament is then separated by such adjournment or prorogation as will not

expire within ten days, a proclamation shall issue for a meeting of parliament within fifteen days, and parliament shall accordingly meet and sit upon a day appointed by such proclamation, and shall continue to sit in like manner as if it had stood adjourned or prorogued to the same day.

Great objection has been taken in my province because the power is there given the Governor in Council to call out the fleet before summoning parliament. It is said that this is a derogation from the rights of parliament and that parliament should exercise its control first. Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer is obvious. The conditions may be such that the government may be forced to take immediate action. Parliament will be called immediately to approve or disapprove, but the conditions may be such as to compel us, without the loss of a minute, to avail ourselves of all our resources in order to come to the rescue of a part of the country which might be threatened. British Columbia, for instance, is exposed to attack from the Orient. I do not think there is any danger at present, because British diplomacy has secured us an alliance with Japan. Nor do I think there is any reason to fear an attack from Russia, because Russia has been crippled by her war with Japan. But all these things may change. Japan may cease to be an ally, Russia may recover her strength, and if we have to wait until parliament meets before we can act in conjunction with the British forces, the results may be disastrous. Circumstances may be such as to force us to do what Japan did—strike the enemy before the enemy strikes us.

I now come to the composition of our fleet. Here again we have not had the good luck to satisfy our friends opposite. It is said in the press, and no doubt will be repeated here, that we should have followed the advice of the admiralty and put a fleet unit on the Pacific ocean. Is there a man who will blame us because we said to the admiralty that we could not agree to put all our forces on the Pacific ocean, that we have also a large sea-board on the Atlantic, and must divide our forces between the two. But we are asked why did you consent to such an insignificant navy as the one you propose. Well, we thought it prudent, for reasons I shall explain in a moment, to commence moderately. Two plans were proposed to us. One was to have a fleet of seven ships and another a fleet of eleven ships. The seven ships were to be composed of three Bristols and four destroyers; the eleven were to be composed of four Bristols, one Boadicea and six destroyers. For the reason that we have to protect our coasts on the Pacific and the Atlantic and consequently to divide our

fleet, we thought it better to have eleven rather than seven ships. In this we acted on the advice of the admiralty. Still we are blamed because we are not to have an armored cruiser of the 'Dreadnought' type. Perhaps I can quote an authority on this point which will satisfy hon. gentlemen opposite. Those staunch imperialists will not be satisfied unless we have a 'Dreadnought' in our navy. While that view is respectable, it does not compare with the opinion of a competent man qualified to speak on the question. I am sure every one will agree that I could not quote a better authority than the old tar, Lord Charles Beresford—as good a seaman as there is in the British navy. In an interview published in the 'Times' of last summer, Lord Charles Beresford said:

His view of the situation was that our great Dominions could best help us, not by spending two millions on battleships to serve in British waters, but by making proposals for defending themselves.

But he questioned the wisdom of their putting money into torpedo vessels and submarines and sending a large amount over here to build a battleship, the life of which was only twenty years, with luck, and might be only twenty months. If they invested two millions in home defence, and in having cruisers which could go out and protect their trade routes, he thought it would be a better investment than in helping to defend the shores of this country.

That, Sir, is what we are doing under this Bill. In another interview, also in the 'Times', Sir Charles Beresford spoke as follows:

For the colonies, cruisers are much better, as the idea of protecting Britain and weakening the defence of the colonies is all wrong.

These were the reasons which actuated us, and I think they are of such a character as will command the approval of this House.

With regard to our scheme, as I stated on the first reading, it is our intention to build eleven ships—four Bristols, one Boadicea and six destroyers. I have given the character of these ships. It is our intention to have them, if possible, built in this country. That will cost a little more and we are prepared to pay a little more provided the difference is not extravagant. We intend to call for tenders as soon as this Bill becomes law, in order to see whether we can have this plant put in this country with the view of building these ships. I have been asked also how long it would take. I must say that I am not able to-day to give these details; I shall be better informed when we come to the committee

stage. My colleague, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, has been unwell, and I have not been permitted to have as many interviews with him as I could wish but giving the matter the best attention that I can, I may say that it would take probably one year to complete a plant for building the ships in this country, and then probably four years to complete these eleven ships. As I said at the first reading of the Bill, the cost of these ships would be a little over \$11,000,000, and the total cost of maintenance, including unkeep of hulls, machinery, sea stores, fuel, interest and depreciation is estimated at \$4,253,000.

Mr. FOSTER. I did not understand my right hon. friend clearly. Do I understand him to say that it will take one year to construct a plant which will be sufficient to build this fleet, and then four years to complete the vessels?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That I understand.

Mr. FOSTER. The Prime Minister gives that to the House, of course, as sufficiently certain, to base the judgment of the House upon.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I would not say that.

Mr. FOSTER. That is what we really want.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. It would be difficult to give more than an approximate idea upon that until we know exactly the proposition made to us. Then we can speak accurately. I give these figures as the result of the best inquiry I can make, no more.

Mr. FOSTER. Who is the authority upon whom my right hon. friend depends?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I cannot give that to my hon. friend to-day.

Mr. FOSTER. We might get into the same difficulty we did in regard to the Grand Trunk Pacific. We want to avoid that if possible.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That is no doubt a laudable object; but I am sure that my hon. friend himself would not regret the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific even if it cost more than it has, and I think perhaps it will be the same with the navy.

Mr. FOSTER. I would not have my right hon. friend take silence as consent. I am altogether opposed to that view. Can he tell what the plant which would be suitable

to construct these vessels would probably cost?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I am not able to give my hon. friend more information than I am giving to-day. I am discussing this matter from a general point of view. When we come to the committee stage, I will endeavor to satisfy his curiosity as to these details.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. May I ask the right hon. gentleman a question? The interpretation clause of the Bill says that 'emergency means war, invasion or insurrection, real or apprehended.' If it requires one year to construct the plant and four years to construct the navy, what would he do if such an emergency arose in the meantime?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I think, Mr. Speaker, we are getting pretty far from the question we have in hand just now.

Mr. J. A. CURRIE. Might I ask the right hon. gentleman a question? It is simply this: does that plant include machinery for the manufacture of guns and machinery?—because seventy per cent. of the cost of these ships consists of guns and machinery.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I think ships and guns are different things. But I am only at present giving a general outline of the policy; I do not think the details are a part of the present discussion on the second reading of the Bill; they can all be asked for in committee of the House. I may say that it is the intention of the government to establish a new department for this service—not under a different minister, but to have a deputy minister charged with the duty of looking after this naval expenditure and this naval construction. On this point I will give further explanations when we are in committee.

There is one other observation I should make. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition, in the course of his observations the other day, if I understood him aright, whilst approving of the principle of this measure, thought it did not go far enough, but that we should also make an emergency contribution on account of the apprehended danger to Great Britain from Germany. I do not know whether I have apprehended rightly the position taken by my hon. friend on this point. I think I did. At all events, if he did not take this position, it has been taken very generally by the press of the country speaking for the other side of the House. For my part, I do not see any cause of danger to Great Britain at the present time. Let me say further, that if Great Britain were engaged in such a con-

test, a wave of enthusiasm to assist her would sweep over this country and all other British countries. It is true, Germany is creating a navy, but I see no reason whatever for supposing that Germany is creating a navy for the purpose of attack or that England is increasing her navy for the purpose of attacking Germany. The fact is that all the nations of Europe at the present time are arming: England is arming, Germany is arming, France is arming, Austria is arming; but I do not believe any of these nations is arming with any intention of attacking their neighbour, but all are arming simply because they are afraid that they will be attacked by one of their neighbours. I was impressed by one statement of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, though I did not share in the conclusions which he implied from it. He said that if war came between England and Germany, it would come within the next three or four years. I have not been able to get any satisfactory answer to this query: what is the reason for supposing that war from Germany is to come within the next three or four years? Germany commenced to build a fleet in 1900; but, as my hon. friend rightly said, no European nation commencing with nothing, as Germany has done, can create a fleet inside of fifteen or twenty years. If that be so, it is not to be expected that Germany will be in a position to attack England within the next three or four years. What will be the position of things in 1912? The figures of comparison between the German and British navies will be as follows. The total tonnage of displacement of the British navy will be 20,000,000 tons, and that of the German navy 890,000 tons, a difference of 19,110,000 tons. Under such circumstances danger is not to be apprehended within three or four years. Moreover, I call attention to this fact. No one knows exactly what is in the minds of the German government, but everybody knows that between the people of England and the people of Germany there is no cause of war. They have always been fast friends so far back as contemporary history goes. In the Seven Years' war England and Prussia were fast allies; in the Napoleonic wars Germany and England were fast allies. And there is another feature: democracy is coming to the front in all the countries of the world, and all the democracy of the world is opposed to war, because it is well known that war falls upon the masses of the people. War may come, I do not say it will not come, but I was impressed by a statement made the other day by my hon. friend opposite. He stated that England had subsidized the nations of Europe time and again to enable them to defend their liberty or their independence, or their autonomy against foreign aggression. England subsidized Prussia under Frederick the Great when Prussia was engaged against France, and Austria in the Seven Years' War. Eng-

land subsidized all the nations of Europe during the Napoleonic war when all the nations of Europe were defending their autonomy, their independence, against the Colossus. She was able to do so, why? Because, of all the nations of Europe, England was the nation which had spent least upon armaments. She had never spent any of her resources as the other nations did, purely upon her armies, she had extended her trade and her commerce, she had developed her resources, and in time of war she was able to assist other nations with money, which as we know, is the nerve and sinew of war. Napoleon, in a fit of anger, called England a nation of shopkeepers. No higher compliment was ever paid to England than this, if it were meant as an insult, because it was these same shopkeepers who grappled with the Colossus and were able to bring him down and make him bite the dust. For Canada, for my country, I would desire no better title than also to be called a nation of shopkeepers—and to be able to supply the sinews of war.

Sir, up to this moment I have endeavoured to meet the arguments of those who in this controversy say that our policy is wanting in the duty which we, as part of the British Empire, owe to England. But Sir, there are also on the other side of the House those who arraign our policy because, as they say, we sacrifice by it the interests of our native land to the interests of the empire. There are the two extremes, they are there, sitting together, side by side, cheek by jowl, blowing hot and cold. I have endeavoured up to the present time to deal with those who blow hot; let me try a word now with those who blow cold. Need I say that this applies chiefly to the hon. member for Jacques Cartier and to those who think with him upon this question. The policy which they have taken in the province of Quebec is that our attitude at the present time is uncalled for and unnecessary, that it is a surprise upon the country, that we never had a mandate to carry it on. Sir, is it possible that such an argument is heard in this House. Have these men been asleep for eight years? Are they Rip Van Winkles? Must I call their attention to the policy we laid down, which has been communicated to this House and to the people and which for eight years has been before the people of this country? At the conference of 1902 we laid this paper before the conference:

“At present Canadian expenditures for defence service are confined to the military side. The Canadian government are prepared to consider the naval side of defence as well.

On the sea coasts of Canada there is a large number of men admirably qualified to

form a naval reserve, and it is hoped that at an early day a system may be devised which will lead to the training of these men and to the making of their services available for defence in time of need.

In conclusion the ministers repeat that while the Canadian government are obliged to dissent from the measures proposed, they fully appreciate the obligation of the Dominion to make expenditures for the purpose of defence in proportion to the increasing population and wealth of the country. They are willing that those expenditures will be so directed as to relieve the tax-payer of the mother country from some of the burdens which he now bears, and they have the strongest desire to carry out their defence schemes in co-operation with the imperial authorities, and under the advice of experienced imperial officers, so far as is consistent with the principle of local self-government which has proved so great a factor in the promotion of imperial unity.”

This paper has been before Canada for the last eight years, and we are told in the province of Quebec that this policy of ours is a new departure. Canada has progressed since 1902. We stated in 1902 that, as Canada advanced in wealth and population, we would advance in our defences. The population of Canada in 1902 was 5,400,000 souls; the population of Canada in 1910 is at least 7,400,000 souls. The revenue of Canada in 1902 was \$58,000,000; the revenue of Canada in 1910 is at least \$100,000,000. We, therefore, think that the time has come when, as was stated in 1902, we should take a step forward, and this is what we are doing. Upon this men can differ, although in my opinion they should not differ, but to tell us that this is something unheard of, a new policy, is simply trifling with common sense. But, Sir, that is not all. They took another position, that the naval service is absolutely uncalled for and unnecessary. Why do we ask parliament to vote for this naval service? It is simply because it is a necessity of our condition and the status we have reached as a nation. Do these gentlemen forget that, as I stated a moment ago, the revenue of Canada is today \$100,000,000, and the population over 7,000,000? Do they forget that our country extends from one ocean to the other, and from the American boundary to the Arctic ocean, not on the map but only in actual and ever-increasing settlements? Do they forget that there are growing up on the Pacific coast, cities fast approaching in strength and wealth, eastern cities, that Vancouver to-day has a population of 100,000, that Victoria has a population of 40,000? Do they forget that Prince Rupert is also fast advancing to the front? Do they forget that we are going to build a railway from the interior to Hudson Bay? Do they forget that we have gold mines under the

Arctic circle? Do they forget that Canada is expanding, like a young giant, simply from the pressure of the blood in its young veins? Are we to be told under such circumstances that we do not require a naval service? Why, Sir, you might just as well tell the people of Montreal, with their half million population, that they do not need any police protection.

But that is not all, there is something coming yet, and the position is taken by gentlemen on the other side of the House, speaking in the province of Quebec, that we are not to risk one man or one dollar for the maintenance, the preservation of British supremacy on the high seas. We took the position last year that we should endeavour and we would endeavour to maintain British supremacy on the high seas. We are told in the province of Quebec that we are not to risk one dollar or one man in order to carry out this object. Sir, I have only to say this, that this service will not be compulsory. No one on the other side of the House, no one in any part of the country will be bound to serve in this navy of ours. It will be the free will of anybody who wishes to risk his life for his King—it is his privilege, and who will deny it to him? Those who object will not have to lift a finger if that fleet is called out. Their part will be simply to enjoy the security, the ease, the comfort, gained for them by the sacrifice of other and better men. We are told that we should not risk one dollar for such a purpose. Sir, if it be the will and wish of the parliament of this country that this navy of ours should engage in war, whose liberty will be affected by it, whose right jeopardized, whose privilege interfered with? This is a constitutional country and the majority have the right to speak and to dispose, and it is the part of the minority to agree and to accept, unless, of course, rights, privileges and liberties are interfered with; but there is no question in this policy that any man's liberty will be interfered with or his rights endangered.

There will be Canadians of French descent in that fleet. And if, which God forbid, this fleet should engage in war, my hope is—nay my certainty is—that these men will fight for the King of England, as their ancestors fought against the King of England when under the gallant Montcalm they repelled attack after attack, when, in the summer of 1759, they kept at bay for three long months on the rock of Quebec the flower of the British army and the flower of the British navy under the command the the young hero, Wolfe. Later, on this same rock of Quebec, they fought for the King of Eng-

land against American invasion. And, still later, on the banks of the Chateauguay river, they fought under that true soldier, Salaberry, to keep the flag of England floating over their homes. All these many events have had their part in making my country what it is. And now, when I review the long conflicts between the French and the English, I follow the events without any sense of shame or humiliation. For history attests that my ancestors fought with all the prowess of their race, a prowess equal to that of their opponents; and, if they lost, they lost because England was at that time under the leadership of one of the ablest men of that generation, the first William Pitt, whereas France was under the influence of the King's mistress. My ancestors lost on that occasion, but it simply transferred their allegiance from one sovereign to another. They lost in the final the battle, but they did not lose anything of their independence, of their liberty, of their rights and privileges; and to-day the sun in his daily career does not shed its light upon any people on the face of the earth enjoying more liberty than my fellow countrymen of French extraction. And my last words to the doubters, to the scoffers, is that freedom is worth fighting for and worth dying for.

But, Sir, these men will not be reached by any noble sentiment; perhaps we can reach them by appealing to their selfish interests; perhaps they will be found sensitive in their pockets if they are not sensitive otherwise. What would be the condition of Canada to-day, and of the province of Quebec in particular, if England were to lose the supremacy of the seas? Canada to-day is a prosperous country. Quebec is a very prosperous province; but is not that prosperity due to our trade with England? Let the market of Great Britain be lost—and it would be lost if the British supremacy on the sea were lost—and the prosperity of Canada and the prosperity of Quebec would be affected for years, if not for ever.

Sir, in the settlement of political problems it is very seldom that a solution can be reached on pure abstract principles. When a conclusion is arrived at, it is reached by taking into consideration several points of view and a common ground has to be found upon which the different schools of thought, the different prejudices and passions, and the different shades of public opinion can be united. That is true everywhere, it is truer in Canada perhaps, than in any other portion of the earth. I stated a moment ago that it was the report of Lord Durham which had been the foundation of the system of local self-government. It may be considered a singular

fact that the report of Lord Durham was received by the French Canadians of that day with pained surprise. The reason is known to those who have studied the history of that period. Friend of liberty as he was, broad as he was in his conceptions, for- visioned as events showed him to have been, Lord Durham himself did not appreciate the whole effect of liberal institutions. Coming to Canada at a time when the very atmosphere was reeking with rebellion, he formed a hasty judgment upon the French population of that day, which he expressed in vehement and somewhat haughty language. He thought they could not be reconciled to British rule, and stated in his report that the conditions were such that the two provinces should be united, so that French Canada should be ruled by the stern and relentless hand of an English-speaking majority. It is not to be wondered at that when the report was made known in Canada it not only caused, as I have said, pained surprise, but produced a feeling of injustice and wrong. Sir, I repeat that Lord Durham, friend of liberty as he was, did not realize the full force of free institutions, did not perceive, as other men perceived at that time—men who, on this subject, had a better conception of things than he had—that there are principles superior to race feeling, that there are principles that can unite men of all origins in a common aspiration for the welfare of their common country. Such a man was Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine; such a man was Robert Baldwin. When the provinces were united Lafontaine, speaking of the act of union, characterized it:

As unjust and despotic in this that it was imposed on us without our consent; in this that it deprives Lower Canada of its legitimate number of representatives; in this that it deprives us of the use of our language in the proceedings of the legislature against the justice of treaties and the pledged word of the Governor General; in this that it forces us to pay against our consent, a debt which one had not contracted; in this that it allows the executive power to take illegal hold, under the name of civil list, of an enormous portion of the revenues of the country.

This was a severe arraignment, and unfortunately it was only too true, but what was the conclusion arrived at by Lafontaine? Did he say that the French Canadians should not accept the Act of union? No. Men there were at that time who immediately started an agitation for the repeal of the union, and those men were joined some years afterwards, when he came back from exile, by Papineau, a strong man, an eloquent man, a man of intense nature, and whom the very intensity

of his nature always carried beyond the point into impracticable conclusions. Lafontaine was a different man, he was a broad man, he understood the situation. The Act of union was not satisfactory to his fellow-countrymen, he thought it was an injustice, but he accepted it, because principles there were by which every injustice could be rectified. It is upon those principles, Mr. Speaker, that we rely. In the address which I have just read, addressed to the electors of Terrebonne, he continued as follows:

The reformers in the two provinces are an immense majority. . . . Our cause is the same. The interest of the reformers in the two provinces is to meet in the legislative ground, in the spirit of peace, of union, of unity, of fraternity. Unity of action is more than ever necessary. I have no doubt that the reformers of Upper Canada feel, as we do, the need of it, and that in the first session of the legislature, they will give us unequivocal proof of it, which, I hope, will be the pledge of a confidence both reciprocal and durable.

Sir, in these noble sentiments he found an auxiliary in that other great and true Canadian and British subject, Robert Baldwin. The confidence which he had looked for, he found; it turned out to be as he expected. It was not only reciprocal and durable. Above all it was fruitful. That policy obtained for the French-Canadians the restoration of the rights of which they had been deprived by the act of unions; it removed the dissensions, which up to that time, had rent the land; it introduced amity and concord among the different races and branches of the Canadian family; it established a permanent and ever-growing prosperity; it increased loyalty to the Crown and brought it to its highest pitch of enthusiasm and devotion; it brought up Canada, step by step, stage by stage, to the high position which it occupies at this moment; and as I said at the beginning, so I say in conclusion, this is the last and crowning effort of the policy which was then happily inaugurated. Sir, we must advance, we cannot remain stationary. We must advance. To remain stationary in this age is to retrograde; we must advance. And again on this occasion, as in the days of Lafontaine and Baldwin, we appeal to moderate men in all parts of the community. We appeal as they did appeal, in a spirit of amity, of union, of fraternity; we appeal, as they appealed, in the highest conception of the duty which we owe to our country and to the mother country. It is the tradition of these great men, which is our supreme inspiration to-day in turning this page of the history of Canada.

